

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-13 RSR-01 ACDA-19 /150 W

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R 180845Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6240

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

CINCPAC HAWAII

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9615

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, XO, IN

SUBJ: DIEGO GARCIA; INDIA-US RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 7370

1. ON AUGUST 16 A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION WAS TABLED WHICH ASKED ABOUT THE GOI REACTION TO THE COMMISSIONING OF A "US BASE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN NEAR CEYLON." THE FOLLOWING REPLY WAS GIVEN BY MINISTER OF STATE SURENDRA PAL SINGH: "DEFENCE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ON 18TH JUNE, 1973 THAT THE "COMMUNICATIONS STATION" AT DIEGO GARCIA, WHICH IS SOME 1,000 MILES FROM SRI LANKA, BECAME OPERATIVE FROM 23RD MARCH, 1973. GOVERNMENT ARE NOT AWARE OF THE COMMISSIONING OF ANY UNITED STATES BASE NEARER SRI LANKA. SINCE 1966, THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAS REPEATEDLY DEPLORED BOTH TO THE U.S. AND TO THE U.K. GOVERNMENTS THEIR DECISION TO SET UP A BASE IN DIEGO GARCIA AS IT COULD LEAD TO GREAT POWER MILITARY RIVALRY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. INDIA'S VIEW THAT
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THE INDIAN OCEAN SHOULD BE AN AREA OF PEACE, FREE FROM

GREAT POWER RIVALRIES, TENSIONS AND PRESENCE IS WELL
KNOWN."

2. COMMENT: MEA ADDITIONAL SECRETARY RAHMAN ON JUNE 22
HAD TOLD DCM THAT WHEN DIEGO GARCIA CAME UP IN PARLIAMENT
THE GOI WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT THE SUBJECT HAD BEEN RAISED
WITH THE USG, THAT THE GOI CONSIDERED THE U.S. PRESENCE
ON DIEGO WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO TENSIONS IN THE AREA, AND
THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE TAKEN UP IN THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
ESTABLISHED UNDER THE INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE COMMITTEE.
DCM HAD URGED THAT GOI SAY NO MORE THAN IT HAD PRE-
VIOUSLY, SINCE SITUATION HAD NOT CHANGED. IN FACT, SURENDRA
PAL SINGH'S AUGUST 16 RESPONSE IS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO
WHAT SWARAN SINGH SAID ON APRIL 13, 1972 AND IS CONSISTENT
WITH PREVIOUS GOI FORMULATIONS. THIS ISN'T IDEAL, BUT
AT LEAST IT IS WHAT WE ASKED FOR. THE GOI CLEARLY CHOSE
NOT TO MAKE A BIG ISSUE OF DIEGO GARCIA.
MOYNIHAN

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